

Washington, DC -- U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) voted today for legislation to add thousands of highly qualified K-12 math and science teachers to our schools - the first step in this Congress's Innovation Agenda to spur economic growth and provide for the next generation of research and progress.

"As a life-long resident of Upstate New York, I have watched our region face many challenges: economic uncertainty, a changing job base, and brain drain as talented young people leave for job opportunities elsewhere," Arcuri said. "But I know our region holds tremendous promise for economic growth and the Innovation Agenda will help secure the federal resources to grow our schools and small businesses, creating economic opportunity and expansion."

"The U.S. is the wealthiest and most powerful country in the world – in order to maintain our competitiveness, we need to ensure that our kids are fully prepared in the subjects of science and math. If we don't reinvigorate our participation in the global economy, the best jobs may soon be found overseas instead of here in Upstate New York."

The "10,000 Teachers, 10 Million Minds" Science and Math Scholarship Act (H.R. 362) would:

- Invest in 10,000 new science and math teachers, totaling some 25,000 over five years, by increasing the number of scholarships for students majoring in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields and who are committed to pursuing teaching.
- Strengthen the skills of math, science and technology of up to 250,000 teachers by improving education and training opportunities for math and science teachers.

H.R. 362 has been endorsed by a broad range of businesses and universities as well as industry and education groups, including the Business Roundtable, Association of American Universities, Council on Competitiveness, the College Board, Semiconductor Industry Association, and the Business Software Alliance.

Currently, only 36 percent of fourth graders and 30 percent of eighth graders are proficient in math. In 2005, 39 percent of 12th graders lacked even basic high school math skills.

The House is expected to also pass legislation today to support young researchers and foster the most innovative scientific research (H.R. 363). Tomorrow, Arcuri will manage debate on a resolution that will allow the Small Business Lending Improvements Act (H.R. 1332) to come to the House floor. H.R. 1332 would strengthen access to capital programs for small businesses, offering them the tools and resources needed to be successful.

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